

‘STREETLIGHTS OF MEMORY’

Federal Court rejects opposition to Armenia genocide memorial

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The "streetlights of memory" were designed by artist Mélik Ohanian.

(Keystone)

Switzerland's highest court has rejected the opposition raised by several Genevans to a recently-unveiled monument commemorating the Armenian genocide in the city.

The decision published by the Federal Court on Monday rejected claims by residents that the monument would lead to the area becoming a site of demonstrations, or even conflict between members of the Armenian and Turkish communities.

“Residents can appeal when they are definitely, or at least with sufficient probability, affected by the repercussions of such a decision,” the court wrote. This was not the case for the monument in Parc Tremblay, Geneva.

The decision should bring to an end the long saga of the monument, which was unveiled in April 2018 after a decade of debates and delay.

Not only was it tricky to find an appropriate location for the genocide memorial – initially approved in 2008 – but opposition from Turkey also made the monument a diplomatic headache into which the federal government was forced to wade.

☑ “Les Réverbères de la Mémoire” [Streetlights of memory], designed by French artist ☑ Melik Ohanian, is a collection of nine street lamps, each ten metres tall and featuring lamps in the form of teardrops, commemorating the 1915-1917 Armenian genocide, which is still disputed by Turkey.

The genocide was recognized by the parliament of Geneva in 2001 and by the Swiss federal parliament in 2003.

